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"HOPE HOTLINE" TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT EDUCATION LOTTERY SCHOLARSHIPS

Nashville, Tenn.— Parents and students who want to know more about the inaugural HOPE Scholarships and the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program (TELS) can now call a toll-free hotline. Scholarship specialists are available to answer questions about eligibility and the application process. The phone number for the HOPE Hotline is (615) 741-1346 or (800) 342-1663.

Dr. Myron Oglesby-Pitts, deputy executive director of the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC), said, "With so much excitement about the new HOPE Scholarships, we want to be sure that Tennessee students have access to the information they need to take advantage of this opportunity. Our specialists are trained to answer specific questions about a student's unique situation, as well as general questions about how and when to apply."

Specialists will be available on the hotline Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Central Standard Time. The hotline is housed at TSAC.

Students who qualify for TELS could earn up to \$4,000 per academic year from a combination of five available awards, including the \$3,000 HOPE Scholarship. In the first year of TELS, scholarships are available to college freshmen from the high school class of 2003 and high school seniors entering college in fall 2004 who meet ACT or GPA requirements. Students attending Tennessee public institutions or Tennessee private institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) may receive TELS funds.

Students who are eligible for TELS can apply for scholarships by applying for enrollment in a Tennessee college, university or technology center and filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the official application for TELS. The FAFSA is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Hard-copy applications are available from high school counselors, college and university financial aid offices, and the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC). The deadline for FAFSA processing is May 1. Processing of hard-copy applications could take up to six weeks. Online processing takes one week to two weeks.

For more information about TELS or the HOPE Scholarship, visit www.state.tn.us/tsac.

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